**Sample Rhetorical Analysis:**

**A Search for Equality**

Anne Roiphe's "Confessions of a Female Chauvinist Sow" first appeared in the magazine *New York* in 1972. In this essay Roiphe aims to convince her readers that women must put faith in the idea that they are equal to men, not superior. "Women who want equality must be prepared to give it and believe in it . . . ." Personal anecdotes, contrast, and comparison are techniques Roiphe skillfully uses to create a strong, convincing essay.

Roiphe begins her essay with a personal anecdote describing the "horrifying" realization that she married a man exactly like her father. This technique immediately establishes the essay as informal and personal. It is a great way to capture the reader's interest. Also, this particular anecdote is used as background information for the first point Roiphe makes in the following paragraph—that ". . . people . . . have at one time or another been fouled up by their childhood experiences." Another anecdote in the essay explains how Roiphe's mother used to give Roiphe "mad money" before going on dates. "My mother and I knew young men were apt to drink too much . . ." and "mad money was for getting home on your own, no matter what form of insanity your date happened to evidence." Anecdotes such as this are entertaining and tend to lighten the mood of the essay. Also, it is quite easy for readers to relate to personal experience. Another function of anecdotes in this essay is to substantiate and support main ideas. At the end of one paragraph Roiphe states, "The hidden anti-male feelings, a result of the old system, will foul us up if they are allowed to persist." This is directly followed by the anecdote explaining the necessity for "mad money"—that men are untrustworthy, inconsiderate beasts. The anecdote clearly provides evidence and support for the fact that women have anti-male feelings.

Shortly after capturing the reader's interest with the introductory anecdote, Roiphe begins using contrast. The numerous examples of contrast throughout the essay portray men and women as being drastically different, especially morally. Boys are thought to be incapable of engaging in ". . . easy companionship . . ." as girls are able to do, and men are generally believed to be ". . . less moral . . ." than women. "Everyone assumes a mother will not let her child starve, yet it is necessary to legislate that a father must not do so." Roiphe uses contrast to illustrate the common anti-male attitudes women have, and in doing so, makes it obvious that women feel superior to men. This exactly, Roiphe points out, is the barrier to equality between men and women. It is clear to the reader that equality between the sexes will never exist as long as women continue to feel superior to men. The contrasts also function to support points Roiphe makes later concerning the similarities between men and women.

About midway through the essay, Roiphe makes a transition from contrast to comparison. She begins focusing on the idea that women are actually quite similar to men. She bluntly states, "Intellectually I know that's ridiculous . . ." to assume ". . . that women given power would not create wars." She admits, "Aggression is not . . . a male-sex-linked characteristic . . . ." Comparisons such as these smoothly lead Roiphe into making one of her strongest comparisons—that ". . . us laughing at them, us feeling superior to them, us ridiculing them behind their backs . . ." is ". . . inescapably female chauvinist sowness." These comparisons, particularly the last one, are shocking and cause the reader to reflect on previous ideas in the essay. Roiphe's statement, ". . . what they have done to us, and of course *they* have, and *they* did and *they* are . . .," momentarily makes readers believe that men are mainly to blame for the inequality between the sexes. However, through effective comparison Roiphe leads her readers to logically infer that women must also be responsible for the inequality between men and women. It then becomes clear to the reader that the ". . . secret sense of superiority . . ." women feel is what makes them equally as chauvinistic as men.

More important than the functions of the techniques she uses independently is how Roiphe uses them together. For example, had she bluntly stated early in her essay that women are "female chauvinist sows," without preceding it with contrast, a quite different effect would have been created. Her readers, particularly the women, would have undoubtedly been offended. This approach would certainly have prevented the essay from being convincing. It is obvious that Roiphe purposely used the techniques in a planned way. This allowed her to create a specifically designed essay that was beneficial in helping her present her ideas.

**Works Cited**

Roiphe, Anne. "Confessions of a Female Chauvinist Sow." *Patterns of Exposition 9*. Ed. Randall E. Decker. Boston: Little, Brown, 1982. 85-90.

In her essay Sex and Death amd the rational World of Defense Intellectuals, Carol Cohn shows that a misuse of language allows the world of defense intellectuals to make decisions using information presented with dehumanizing language. She suggest through deductive reasoning as a researcher examining national security discourse that military language uses a style that familiarizes it with us, and that by doing so, it dehumanizes people to a point a non-existence. Cohn explores how military language's focus is not on the people affected, but rather the weapons, and how that dehumanization is apparent in rooms where vital decisions regarding security are made. Her analysis of military language appeals to the readers logic, as well as emotions using many examples (some of which detract from her own ideas).   
  
  
Cohn's argument that military discourse has become too familiar, and desensitizing, is brought about by her analysis of specific words or phrases used, and what they actually mean. "One missle [the MX] the bearer of destruction approximately 250-400 times that of the hiroshima bombings... ...analysts refer to the MX as a 'damage limitation weapon'" and "Surgically clean strikes... ...The image is unspeakably ludicrous when the surgical tool is not a delicately controlled scalpel but a nuclear warhead". These comparisons help Cohn describe to the reader how using a form of language that avoids bringing about the topic of chaos and destruction, but rather precision, and modesty, can lessen the effect of the actions in question on the people examining them. Cohn helps appeal to the logic of the reader by illustrating that military language uses a coded sense to help avoid any emotions that could be aroused when discussing weapons capable of henious destruction. Ironically, most of Cohn's examples that respond to her claim that military language is rife with familiarization work against her, if the reader has a limited knowledge of military terms prior to reading. In discussing "thrust to weight ratios... ...vectored thrust capability." when discussing her stance on the prevalence of sexual imagery, Cohn shows that she is unaware how even as a credible resource about military language, she did not realize "thrust" is the only word used commonly or scientifically to describe the force that is produced by jet engines. This shows her use of deductive reasoning to appeal to the readers logic as failed in some areas, as her arguments are irrational, and lack sense. It also shows how Carol's determination to find evidence for her claims, caused her to see things where they were not, and how her use of reasoning was effective in most places, but paradoxically worked against itself in others.   
  
  
Through her essay, Cohn also puts forth the argument that military language dehumanizes those affected by it. She says "These devices are called "reentry vehicles,'..a term totally removed from the reality of a bomb" to argue this. This appeal to a readers emotions, as it gives the impression that military talk is decieving, and the information presented to the public, although truthful, and correct, uses a style of language that diverges from the reality of war, death, and chaos, to a transmutation of sanitized everyday banter. Cohn makes effective use of ethical persuasion as well, because she shows "The imagery that domesticates, that humanizes insentient weapons, may also serve, paradoxically, to make it all right to ignore sentient human beings". This appeal to our ethics works well in her favour, because it makes the reader feel as if they are acting wrong by accepting this from of discourse, and it causes the reader to also think about what is happening; something the sanitized, domesticated national security discourse trys to prevent. From this, she argues that this misuse of language affects someone who uses it's rationality and their capacity to make decisons. "...as though the moral ones were not enough". that phrase helps her appeal once more to the readers emotions, as she uses herself as an example of someone who was manipulated by military discourse into not fully thinking of the moral consequences of her discussion, and her prior regognition that she thought of the "military justifications" first, shows the way of thinking our domesticated military jargon influences. This works well to show the reader exactly how the language affects a person, and their capacity to act rationally.   
  
In her essay, Carol Cohn is mostly succesful in presenting her idea that national security discourse desensitizes us to the realities of war, and that it also dehumanizes the vicitms of those realities to the reader. Her constant use of examples achieved through experience in the field, and ideas developed upon that constantly appeal to the readers ethics, logic, and emotions. Her use of some non-pertinent examples, and the improper use of others in the context of sexual imagery, can detract from her main idea, but they still do not over shadow it.